

Business Operations and Technical Services (BOATS)

Question Set 4

NNA08223261R-ACD

March 13, 2009

Q1. On the first page of BOATS Status Update (12Feb09), section "Information Specifically Related to the Acquisition" in the second paragraph there is a reference to "... pricing 2 of the FFP type contract ... ". Is "pricing 2" a typo?

A1. Review of the posted document in "pdf" did not reveal this anomaly. However, it is possible that the page number was picked up within the paragraph.

Q2. Why is NASA changing the type of contract from CPAF to FFP?

A2. The requirements are better able to be clearly defined in task orders.

Q3. Pages L-11 and L-12 are page numbered as M-11 and M-12.

A3. This will be corrected in the final RFP.

Q4. Are there specifications for the margins of the proposal document?

A4. This is included in the Proposal Page Limitation provision.

Q5. Does the cover page count toward the page limitations?

A5. This is included in the Proposal Page Limitation provision.

Q6. Does the cover letter count toward the page limitations?

A6. This is included in the Proposal Page Limitation provision.

Q7. Do the table of contents pages count toward the page limitations?

A7. This is included in the Proposal Page Limitation provision.

Q8. Are there font type and size specifications?

A8. This is included in the Proposal Page Limitation provision.

Q9. Are there header/footer guidelines or specifications?

A9. No, there are no guidelines or specifications for headers or footers.

Q10. Are there specifications for page numbering each volume?

A10. This is included in the Proposal Preparation – General Instructions provision.

Q11. Are there specifications or guidelines for graphics (font sizes, types, etc.)?

A11. This is included in the Proposal Page Limitation provision.

Q12. Are fold-out pages or 11 x 17 pages permitted? If so, what are the guidelines for using?

A12. This is included in the Proposal Page Limitation provision.

Q13. Is a PDF format acceptable for electronic submissions of Volumes 1 and 2, and the narrative for Volume 3?

A13. This is included in the Proposal Preparation – General Instructions provision.

Q14. Are there page limitations for past performance for major subcontractors, and does this count toward the total page count for Volume 2?

A14. This is included in the Proposal Page Limitation Provision.

Q15. PRIME AND MAJOR SUBCONTRACTOR PAST CONTRACTS table, bottom of column A says, "Other NASA Contracts:" What contracts are required under this heading? Are all non-relevant NASA contracts to be listed?

A15. The "other NASA contracts" area has been deleted from this table.

Q16. Regarding this pricing requirement, please identify exactly which Wage Determination will apply to the awarded contract?

A16. The applicable Wage Determination is 2005-2062.

Q17. Please identify which labor categories NASA knows will be required of the winning contractor under that Wage Determination.

A17. This will be included in the final RFP.

Q18. Please clarify the location for "... all relevant contracts as described in L.x(b)". This paragraph does not exist.

A18. L.x was used as a place-holder number. The number has been corrected to L.7.

Q19. The first paragraph states in part, "If the offeror or major subcontractor does not have enough references to meet these requirements, ..." Is there a required number of references to be provided?

A19. This has been revised and is included in the posted Draft Complete Section L.

Q20. Subparagraphs (1) and (2) refer to "NASA contracts." Are relevant contracts with organizations other than NASA included in these requirements? Are only NASA organizations to be considered for the list of agencies/companies who will be responding to the Past Performance Questionnaire?

A20. This has been revised and is included in the posted Draft Complete Section L.

Q21. What are page limitation requirements for (i) Mission Suitability, (ii) Past Performance, (iii) Cost/Price, (iv) Resume package for Key Personnel (L-4)?

A21. This is included in the Proposal Page Limitations Provision.

Q22. You ask for 3 professional references for Key Personnel. Specifically what contact information do you require (mailing address, email, telephone, fax)?

A22. Offerors may use their own discretion regarding the contact information required.

Q23. The offeror is requested in the Phase-In Plan to: "Describe general rationale and approaches for hiring and/or replacing incumbent personnel (L-5, M-7); and provide, "estimate of, and supporting rationale for, the number of incumbent contractor employees the offeror expects to hire" (L-5, M-7). Will the government provide a list of the key incumbent personnel desired or required to be hired by the contractor?

A23. The government will not provide a list of key incumbent personnel. It is the offeror's responsibility to determine the best approach for completing the requirements in the statement of work.

Q24. The February 12, 2009 draft SOW removes specific references to publications and printing work from the BOATS contract. What metrics will apply in determining deadlines and service level agreements?

A24. The BOATS statement of work no longer includes the requirement.

Q25. Will the government evaluate the transition period of 30 days as a blanket measurement for all non-incumbent personnel? This gives the incumbent an unfair advantage despite best pre-award planning.

A25. Each offeror's phase-in plan, including the incumbent's, will be evaluated in accordance with the Section M provision Evaluation Approach.

Q26. Since the incumbent contractor will have a competitive advantage because it won't need a transition period, how will NASA offset that competitive advantage to ensure a level playing field?

A26. Each offeror's phase-in plan, including the incumbent's, will be evaluated in accordance with the Section M provision Evaluation Approach.

Q27. If the incumbent does not win, how and when will NASA make it known to the winning contractor which of the incumbent employees it wants the winning contractor to hire?

A27. It is the offeror's responsibility to determine the best approach for completing the requirements in the statement of work.

Q28. Has NASA provided a contractual mechanism to insure that those incumbent employees will agree to work for the winner?

A28. There is no contractual mechanism to insure incumbent employees will agree to work for a successor contractor. It is the offeror's responsibility to determine the best approach for hiring and retaining personnel capable of completing the requirements in the statement of work.

Q29. Will NASA ARC consider unpriced management solutions and operational efficiencies offered by the contracts?

A29. The offeror's proposal must respond to all requirements in the Section L provision Proposal Preparation – Specific Instructions.

Q30. The first paragraph says the Past Performance Proposal must include a list of relevant government industry contracts in excess of \$1M over the past five years. Is this list to include "Major Subcontractors" contracts?

A30. Yes, this has been clarified in Provision L.7 Proposal Preparation – Specific Instructions.

Q31. In paragraph II. Past Performance Proposal (Volume II), question related to this sentence: "The Past Performance Proposal must include a list of all relevant government and industry contracts, each in excess of \$1,000,000 total contract value, received in the past five (5) years, or currently in negotiation, involving types of related effort." The word "received" in this sentence implies that past performance is acceptable for contracts awarded or received within the past five years, not performed within the past five years. Should the word received be changed to performed?

A31. Yes, this has been revised.

Q32. Do the incumbent contractor's employees have a requirement in their employment agreements with the incumbent which requires those employees to accept offers of employment from a firm who wins this contract and unseats the incumbent? If not, how will the winning contractor—if it's not the incumbent—secure employment agreements from the incumbent's employees?

A32. The offeror's response to the Staffing, Recruitment, Retention, and Training area of Management Approach must include the offeror's approach to hiring, and retaining, the appropriate skills to perform the requirements of the statement of work.

Q33. The chart on page L-1 showing Index of Mission Suitability Subfactors and Elements has element "a" as Organizational Structure and Approach. However, the detailed narrative on page L-2 lists Organizational Structure and Approach as "i". Should it be "a" instead of "i"?

A33. This has been corrected.

Q34. What portion of the workforce, if any, will require security clearances?

A34. We are unable to provide a specific portion. It is dependent on task orders for this contract.

Q35. Is a NASA SECRET clearance comparable to a DOD SECRET clearance? Will NASA accept staff with DOD SECRET clearances and transfer their clearances as NASA SECRET?

A35. Yes, these clearances are comparable. NASA has a reciprocity agreement with other federal agencies. After verification of the existing SECRET clearance, NASA will accept it.

Q36. How will access to applicable NASA security regulations be made available to vendors? Current versions of the NASA Security Handbook and the NASA Procedures and Guidelines are sought.

A36. Applicable regulations and other directive documents will be provided to the contractor by the government.

Q37. 12Feb09 draft SOW refers to Documentation and Publications Processing Support but it does not get into the level of detail or specifics related to writing, editing, computer-assisted typesetting, keyboarding, formatting, page layout, printing, binding, etc. Though the revised SOW is silent on these specifics, are they nonetheless required functions in support of Documentation and Publications Processing Support?

A37. The statement of work includes all known requirements for this acquisition.

Q38. 12Feb09 draft SOW refers to Documentation and Publications Processing Support but it does not get into the level of detail or specifics related to reproduction services, produce paper copies from paper and electronic print master originals, one-/two-sided copying and duplication, on-line electronic publishing, high-speed reprographic production, color copying and printing, engineering drawing reproduction and bindery operations, reprographic equipment maintenance, maintenance of reprographic paper and supplies, etc. Though the revised SOW is silent on these specifics, are they nonetheless required functions in support of Documentation and Publications Processing Support?

A38. The statement of work includes all known requirements for this acquisition.

Q39. How will access to applicable NASA and ARC publishing policies and requirements be made available to vendors?

A39. Applicable regulations and other directive documents will be provided to the contractor by the government.

Q40. 12Feb09 draft SOW refers to Facilities Engineering and Real Property Management but it does not get into the level of detail or specifics related to Moffett Development, California Air and Space Center (CASC) development, NASA Research Park (NRP), and other economic development efforts and legal support as clearly identified in the older SOW to exploit the potential for full utilization of Center assets to the maximum support of the NASA Ames mission, etc. Though the revised SOW is silent on these specifics, are they nonetheless required functions in support of Facilities Engineering and Real Property Management?

A40. The statement of work includes all known requirements for this acquisition.

Q41. One contractor and another contractor, who are teaming together as a single Joint Venture entity, hold an active facility clearance. Since both contractors hold a facility clearance, does this meet the requirement?

A41. As long as both contractors have a facility clearance and one is listed as prime, they will meet the requirement.

Q42. Section M, page 3 states: "Information submitted in Volume I of the proposal that is not relevant to the Mission Suitability factor will not be evaluated, except that if the SEC determines that a proposal does not adequately demonstrate that the offeror will be able to perform the work with the resources proposed, the SEC may determine this to be a mission suitability weakness as well as require an adjustment for probable cost." Please elaborate on the Government's process for performing probable cost adjustments. For example, will an offeror's ability to retain the incumbent workforce by providing a comparable total compensation package (salaries and benefits) be factored into cost realism (i.e., will the difference between proposed labor rates and incumbent labor rates be used to determine cost realism and adjustments for probable cost)?

A42. This area will be revised in the final solicitation.

Q43. In the 2003 BOATS RFP Section M, Management Approach, regarding an offeror's Total Compensation Plan, it states: "...Proposals offering total compensation levels less than currently being paid by the predecessor contractor for the same work will be evaluated, in addition to the above, on the basis of maintaining program continuity, uninterrupted high quality work, and availability of required competent professional employees. Offerors are cautioned that instances of lowered compensation for essentially the same professional work may be considered a lack of sound management judgment, in addition to indicating a lack of understanding the requirement." Because this earlier language does not appear in the new RFP under Section M, Total Compensation Plan, should bidders take it to mean that retention of the incumbent work force is less a Government priority in this round of the contract? Or will lowered compensation for essentially the same professional work be considered a lack of sound management judgment, in addition to indicating a lack of understanding the requirement?

A43. No, the bidder should not believe that the retention of the incumbent workforce is less a Government priority for this acquisition. The Total Compensation Plan will be evaluated for reasonableness.

Q44. There is no mention in Sections L or M of the SBA Ostensible Subcontractor Rule. The BOATS contract requires specialized skills and capabilities that are not found in the mainstream small business community. Will the Government include the following information in the final RFP to avoid SBA inquiries and/or protests following source selection (derived from a recent NASA/JSC small business set-aside RFP), or, are small business prime contractors allowed to team with large business subcontractors and rely on the large businesses capabilities and experience to satisfy the BOATS requirements?

SBA OSTENSIBLE SUBCONTRACTOR RULE INFORMATION

(a) If a subcontracting arrangement is proposed, Offerors shall include specific detail in the following areas so that the Government can determine that the prime Contractor making the offer will be performing the primary and vital requirements for the contract.

(1) Who will manage the contract.

(2) Which party possesses background and expertise necessary for contract performance.

(3) Which party pursued the contract.

(4) The degree of collaboration in preparation and submission of competitive proposal.

(5) Whether there are discreet tasks to be performed by each of the teaming partners, or whether there is instead commingling of personnel and resources.

(6) The relative amount of work to be performed by each teaming partner.

(7) Which party will perform the more complex and costly contract functions.

(8) The business size of the other parties.

(9) Which of the parties possess the qualifications relevant to the contract requirements.

(10) Describe how the Offeror will ensure compliance with FAR 52.219-14, Limitations on Subcontracting.

A44. We have determined that this rule does not apply to this acquisition. All proposals will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with sections L and M.

Q45. In the 2003 BOATS RFP, the Government asked bidders to respond to hypothetical projects to assess bidders' technical understanding and approach. Will that be included in this RFP? If it is not going to be included as a requirement, could you explain why?

A45. Yes, sample projects are included with the Photographic/Video/Multimedia area of Section L.7.

Q46. First, Section L, subfactor 1, paragraph 1d, asks offerors to provide a total compensation plan "for all personnel proposed", and to include "salary ranges and fringe benefits proposed for employees." However, the draft solicitation doesn't provide any metrics about incumbent employees, upon which offerors can develop such a compensation plan. It seems that only the incumbent contractor currently has the capability to provide such details. So, can you provide additional information about the government's expectations of approximate staffing levels for each of the functional areas specified in the SOW?

[A46. An estimated staffing matrix will be posted with the final RFP.](#)

Q47. Similarly, in Section L, subfactor 1, paragraph 1b, your solicitation asks offerors to describe our plans for "accommodating short-term increases in the workload including provision for short notice, rapid (within 10 calendar days) recruiting of experienced and qualified personnel. Section M, paragraph M.2(c)(1)(e) also specifies that proposals will be evaluated to determine offeror completeness in estimating "the number of incumbent contractor employees the offeror expects to hire." Unless the government provides some details about the numbers and qualifications of incumbent contract staff and government performance expectations, offerors do not have sufficient information upon which to provide meaningful comment--especially for positions that require security clearances or specialized educational or vocational experience. So, in addition to information about expected staffing levels, can you provide additional information about any positions where the government requires specialized skills or qualifications?

[A47. This will be clarified in the final RFP.](#)

Q48. Section L, subfactor 1, paragraph 1c requires offerors to provide information about Key Personnel but does not provide the cross-reference source for page limitations. When do you expect to provide these instructions?

[A48. This is included in the Proposal Page Limitations Provision.](#)

Q49. It appears that the pertinent clauses relevant to the Organizational Conflicts of Interest Avoidance Plan (Section L, subfactor 1, paragraph 1g) are missing in this solicitation (the solicitation simply lists the references as "H.x"). How are these references affected by President Obama's recent Executive Order about former government employees?

[A49. This will be addressed in the final solicitation.](#)

Q50. Neither Section L, subfactor 2, nor the Statement of Work includes a Performance Requirements Summary upon which offerors can structure an Operations Plan. What performance expectations/requirements does the government have upon which offerors can develop meaningful proposals to "enhance workflow, increase productivity, enhance communications, improve quality, and reduce cost"?

[A50. The offerors are to base their proposals response to fulfilling the requirements of the statement of work.](#)

Q51. Draft SOW paragraph 4.5.2. How many libraries will receive support from the BOATS contract and what types of libraries will receive this support?

A51. There are currently two libraries: a technical library and a law library.

Q52. Draft SOW paragraph 4.5.2. Which libraries require personnel with security clearances?

A52. Currently, security clearances are not required for personnel supporting the libraries.

Q53. Draft SOW paragraph 4.9 Are any of the current employees of Planners Collaborative covered by a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and if so with which unions?

A53. There are no CBAs for the current BOATS contract.

Q54. Will all current CBA's be included in the final RFP?

A54. There are no CBAs for the current BOATS contract.

Q55. Page L-1 and Page M-3 table "Index of Mission Suitability Subfactors and Elements" Element Column. Should management of contract task orders be included after item a as a new item b?

A55. The paragraph numbers have been corrected.

Q56. Page M-13, M-3 (c,d). Will cost be a weighted factor in the evaluation process?

A56. Yes, the relationship of the three factors is described in Section M.3, Weighting and Scoring.

Q57. Page A-6, 4-2 Acquisition. Will performance of SOW 4-2 preclude or limit functioning in a prime or sub role on any other NASA ARC contracts?

A57. The limitations are addressed in the Organizational Conflicts of Interest, and Limitation of Future Contracting Clause, which will be included in the final RFP.

Q58. What is the number of current employees and how are they distributed across the current contract?

A58. There are approximately 80 current employees supporting BOATS requirements. Staffing varies by issued task orders.

Q59. (Draft RFP 4.5.3). Is the records management media electronic or paper? If paper, please identify specified storage locations.

A59. Records management media may be electronic or paper and may be located on-site, at the federal records center, or other official records facilities.

Q60. The draft RFP requires resumes for key positions. If the offeror were to propose retaining current key personnel, these resumes would not be available because of competitive reasons. Are the resumes for these positions still required or should alternatives be looked at?

A60. The offeror must include key personnel information as required by the RFP.

Q61. Will there be a planned industry day/site visit?

A61. No.

Q62. Could Ames list the names of all incumbent subcontractors supporting the current BOATs contract?

A62. This information may be available through FOIA.

Q63. Will the actual pricing spreadsheets have formulas or will we have to create them?

A63. As appropriate, the pricing spreadsheet(s) will include formulas.

Q64. When will the historical data/documents for the past fiscal year be available?

A64. As appropriate, this information will be included in the final solicitation.

Q65. Will recurring services be specifically defined and be a part of FFP?

A65. This acquisition does not include a core and IDIQ area. The entire statement of work is for services for the full period of performance.

Q66. When will Section J be available?

A66. Section J and attachments not yet posted will be included in the final solicitation.

Q67. Page A-25 paragraph 4.13. Please define what is meant by “providing functional leadership regarding legal services.”

A67. In accordance with CTOs, the contractor will assist the legal office regarding legal services. This section of the SOW will be clarified in the final solicitation.

Q68. Page A-6 and A-7 paragraph 4.2. Please describe the acquisition functions that ARC supports in paragraph 4.2.

A68. The BOATS contractor will support the Acquisition Division by performing the functions explained in 4.2.1 through 4.2.3.

Q69. Page A-6 and A-7 paragraph 4.2. Are there any activities outside of ARC for which ARC provides acquisition support?

A69. The Acquisition Division has provided support to other NASA centers during emergencies such as hurricane Katrina. In addition, ARC works closely with other agencies in a collaborative manner as necessary.

Q70. Page A-6 and A-7 paragraph 4.2. Are there activities within ARC that are supported by other acquisition activities?

A70. The BOATS contractor will support the Acquisition Division by performing the functions explained in 4.2.1 through 4.2.3.

Q71. Page A-31 paragraph 4.15. Please confirm whether or not the contractor will be making recommendations for future acquisition and contracting actions pursuant to its responsibilities in para 4.15

A71. Recommendations for future acquisition and contracting actions are not included in the description of 4.15 Strategic Management and Analysis.

Q72. Page A-31 paragraph 4-15. Is the Strategic Analysis outlined in para 4-15 limited to ARC or a subset of ARC?

A72. Strategic analysis support is for ARC as required by CTO.